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FAREWELL ADDRESS  
OF  
GEORGE THOMPSON, ESQ.,  
TO THE  
NATIONAL ANTI-CORN-LAW LEAGUE,

*Delivered Oct. 27, 1842,*

PREVIOUS TO HIS LEAVING ENGLAND FOR INDIA.

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GEORGE THOMPSON, Esq., then came forward, and was received with loud cheers. He said: Mr. Chairman,—I am extremely happy that I have once more an opportunity of addressing an audience in Manchester, and of expressing my firm attachment to a cause, which I deeply regret I shall not for some time be able to labour for, in consequence of being called, as I think, and as my friends around me think, to pursue the path of duty in another direction. Sir, there is one point of view in which this cause may be regarded, which to me appears an important one; and as you have called upon me to address this meeting, I shall make a few remarks upon it. I mean the connexion between the present appalling distresses of the country, and the acts of the government—and between both of these and the morals of the people. (Hear, hear.) It is one of the most inspiring and mysterious considerations in relation to the nature of man, that his morality, so mighty in itself, and so endless in its issues, should be exposed to mortification and injury, from every influence that reaches him in his passage through life. The passions of his parents and playmates affect it, long after he is removed from their locality and sight. The influence of antediluvian biography—the remotest imaginings of fancy—the tales of the nursery—the weeds of the garden—the loves and fears of far-off strangers—the dreams of his neighbours—the fall of a thunder-storm—or the song of a ballad hawker—are all elements in the causes that collaterally affect the morality of our nature. (Hear, hear.) Over that, however, and a thousand other coadjutant forces, the will of man should and can exert a presiding potency, and an all-subordinating control. The power to do this constitutes part of our moral obligation; the omission to exercise this power, a power of which we are all conscious, which we all confess to ourselves, (though we too often plead the force of circumstances,) the omission to exercise this power, I say, is “the head and front of our offending.” (Applause.) Much of the world’s

morality is, however, the creature rather of constitution, interest, or habit, than of reflection and choice. But what then? Why this most certainly; the more spurious, imperfect, and contingent the floating every-day morals of the world are, the more grave, the more necessary, the more incumbent is the duty of wisely and jealously warding off the obliquitous influences by which men are known to be governed to so great an extent, and to secure if possible that the causes which habitually affect our morality should be as sound as they are permanent. Perhaps there is nothing that can be named, next to the power of domestic life, that operates on our morals with such uniform emphasis as *the laws under which we live*. They are made to produce certain effects, they are armed with high sanctions, they are backed by an all but irresistible power, they are enforced by pains and penalties, they are a present and constantly operating motive, either restraining or inciting. Let me illustrate this by a reference to circumstances around us. *Poverty* is, it is well known, when excessive, in most instances the mother of crime. If, therefore, the laws of a country doom the greater part of its people to a state of poverty, they become permanent "ministers of sin," (Hear, hear,) and, as far as they have this tendency, they are chargeable with the guilt of immorality. What an appalling mass, then, of antagonist power are the governments of the world? The anathemas uttered in Paradise contained no elements inimical to the moral interests of the banished parents of our race. None. But, alas, the influence of most bodies of human law is ultimately ruinous to the character of the people for whose government they are framed. An immoral law is seminal revolution; and, like all other seminal powers, requires only that time and circumstances should elaborate the mighty mischief. Hence the decline of former empires. "Assyria, Greece, Rome, Carthage, where are they?" And the same cause will precipitate, if not counteracted, our own fall. Immoral laws generally begin their history by creating false wealth, and false standards of excellence and power, which again become the seeds of other evils, and work the ruin of the state. (Hear, hear.) Take the subject of poverty in connection with the spread of religion. A greater obstacle to the spread of religious truth, and its influence on the hearts of the people of this country, (apart from the natural indisposition of the human mind to the reception of peculiar doctrines,) does not exist, than the excessive and wide-spread destitution of the people. (Applause.) Take, for example, the small number of the poorest of the people who attend the various places of worship; to say nothing of the sense of shame which keeps them back, or their inability to pay pew rents, or to leave their Sabbath contributions behind them. How is it possible, even in well-regulated minds, to disabuse the heart of care, that has already become familiar with the pangs of hunger? (Hear.) Religion commands contentment with *some*, but, surely not with *every* degree of indigence, or with indigence by whatsoever cause brought about. God has designed that all his creatures should

labour; but he has certainly not designed that they should starve *as their reward*. (Cheers.) Industry is necessary to religion; but, where industry has no labour, how, in ill-educated minds at least, is the assertion that "Godliness is profitable to all things; and has the promise of this life, as well as of that which is to come," to be made compatible with compulsory mendicity? The poor naturally interrogate, "Is it of God that we live on nettle porridge, sprinkled with meal, (Hear, hear,) while the aristocracy, who are no more than we, his creatures, squander in the plated ware and gorgeous liveries of their saddle horses, and in the splendid kennels and good food of their hounds, more than we can procure by incessant toil, and mechanical skill?" In vain does the preacher enjoin contentment to such questioners, or point them to their inalienable freeholds in heaven. The range of evangelical truth has no reply to hunger; but, "work with your hands, that you may eat that which is good;" but poverty bewails, "no man hath hired us." To the rich the minister is enjoined to say, "If thou seest thy brother have need, and shuttest up the bowels of thy compassion, how dwelleth the love of God in thee?" But, for the most part, the admonition is as unheeded as the ambiguous ravings of the Pythoness. What is the preacher's alternative? Either to take the side of the poor, and demand justice from the government, and thus drive the rich by what, in revenge, they will soon stigmatize as "*political preaching*;" or, by passing over the claims of a population sunken to beggary, by a few words of cheap condolence, thus for ever lose their ears and their hearts. This, we are sorry to say, is the alternative which many have chosen. (Hear, hear.) We are the judge of none; but we cannot escape the conviction that the *pulpit* has lost much of its power over the masses of the people, from the coy and reluctant advocacy with which it has taken up this cause. (Loud cheers.) If *ministers* are the representatives of Christ in one sense, the *poor* are in another; and in an unnatural condition, in which the millions are sacrificed, we are convinced that ministers would be justified by their master, in imitating those brave men who, in other times, have awhile conjoined active patriotism with their pastorate, and compelled the equitable adjustment of the laws. We are aware of the odium of political preaching, and hate its ordinary employment; but the ministers of the New Testament ought not to be alarmed at a name and a sneer, (Hear, hear,) which would win them more souls and more true and legitimate power than they will ever lose by advocating the cause of our Saviour's representatives, *the poor*. (Applause.) When Lord Strafford was about to engage in the expedition against the Covenanters, he requested the king to command the clergy to "preach up the cause." The aristocracy know the power of the pulpit, and have often used it to the basest purposes of faction. Every government knows the power of the pulpit, and the power it wields is continually called into play against the people, and for the promotion of government objects. For once, then, let it ring; or, at least, that part of it which is free from the

hateful thralldom in which the State binds the power of the pulpit; let it ring with an exposition of the principles of political morality, and while it would sweetly ascend with the prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread," it would go far towards winning back the alienated hearts of the suffering multitudes, who have had too much reason for their proverbial gibe, "Oh, it is nothing but a parson." (Cheers.) Sirs, let me not be supposed as at all sympathising with the spirit and still less with the acts of some who have stood forward to aid the cause of political regeneration. Whatever is alien in *temper*, or *conduct*, from the precepts and genius of the gospel, I would, and do condemn. But am I, therefore, blind to the *shortenings* and *delinquencies* of those who ought to be, and might be, from their high and holy sphere, the expounders and champions of political morality? No, far from it. I charge upon their negligence, and their time-serving, those evils in the shape of violence and tumult which attach to a movement, which is coldly and scornfully left to be harangued by those who are not possessed of their *influence*, their *education*, or their *wisdom*. (Applause.) Oppression drives a *wise man mad*; and, if the hungry poor are left alone, *unaided* and *uncared* for, to assert their own rights, what wonder if, in the hour of their *desertion*, *desolation*, and *despair*, they stain, with some misdeeds, the banner of justice they have set up? (Hear, hear.) Look at the influence ministers exerted in this country upon the emancipation question! (Cheers.) It was said, and not without reason, that the cause was carried by the Quakers and the dissenting ministers of the country. Did they impair their usefulness by so doing? ("No," and loud cheers.) Far from it. They now point with self exultation to their labours and triumphs in the cause. (Cheers.) Tell me what has given the Baptists and other missionaries the mighty hold they have upon the affections and confidence of the population of the West India islands, a power by means of which the missionaries, and not the soldiers; the gospel, and not the proclamations of government, have humbled the hundreds of thousands of swarthy and new born freemen to obedience, and reverential regard for the law? (Loud cheers.) What? why, the knowledge that these men stood boldly by them in their bonds, rebuked the oppressor, demanded justice, took the spoiling of their own goods joyfully, and fought like Michael, till the fell dragon of slavery went howling from the fair islands of the Caribbean Sea, to find a shelter, but only for a time, under the proud walls of the American Capitol. (Great cheering.) The struggle would be short, if the awful power of the pulpit were turned upon the famine-creating laws of monopoly. (Applause.) The struggle would be short if the pulpit, recognising the flagrant and wholesale injustice of leaving law making in the hands of the few, and recognising, too, all the evils which spring from that circumstance, if it were boldly to denounce the cause of oppression, and famine, and misery. (Applause.) I would have the pulpit fearlessly proclaim the cause of causes, the master evil. (Hear.) I would have the pulpit carry the people to the spring-head

of these streams of iniquity which, like filthy irrigations, produce a rank and offensive fertility, and spread moral contagion all around. Am I sincere, if, while I profess to pity the effect, I conceal the cause? I am not. Am I sincere if, while I censure and seek to repress the excesses of the people, I do not, with the mild authority of truth, advocate their cause? Blame the people as you will, they have justice on their side. (Cheers.) They ask bread, and they have a right to it. Their labour is ready, their hands are ready, their sweat is ready, their ingenuity is ready and unrivalled. He would demand that their toil should be fully and fairly remunerated. Millions wait to be clad in the garments they could fabricate, and they are first in their demand for the annihilation of laws which cramp their industry, and rob them of their only but honourable inheritance. The people ask a larger share in political power, and they have a right to it! (Cheers.) Their birth demands it. The very soil on which they were born demands it for them. Their native hills, and hoary mountains, and level plains, whose freedom they have defended with their blood, speak and demand it for them. (Cheers.) Their stupendous monuments of human toil demand it. The teeming wealth of the country, wealth which they have created, demands it. (Cheers.) Every flag which waves over the tomb of the hero who led on their sires to battle demands it. The carriage in which the monopolist rides, the mansion in which he reposes, which the people have made with their own hands, demand it. Their steady allegiance demands it. Their native virtue demands it. Their passive sufferings demand it. Their immortal nature demands it. (Cheers.) The living God demands it, who has said, "All things whatsoever ye would that man should do unto you, do ye also unto him." (Cheers.) Now, suppose the ministers of our holy religion, the essence of whose morality I have given in the sublime maxim just quoted, were to take their stand for the people! Would the people forget the services thus rendered? No, rather, with what fine effect and appropriate authority might ministers of religion then appeal to the people and say, "Godliness is profitable to the life that now is. (Applause.) We have aided your interests, not merely by prayer and sympathy, but by every means in our power, to compel the government to remove the unjust laws that drive you to mendicity or the poorhouse, or make you mere political outcasts, in whom it would be sacrilege to attempt to touch the ark of the state, or enter within the pale of the constitution. And now that we have proved our love to you, by first obtaining the bread that perishes, we beseech you to give us equal credit for sincere zeal for your welfare, in urging you to seek the better and abiding substance which is in heaven." Would such appeals, backed by such services, be without effect? In some cases they would, for man is not only wicked but ungrateful; but, in many instances, I am confident that untold results of goodness would follow the labours of Christian ministers in this cause of humanity, not to say religion too. And what can be a finer theme for any man, placed in society in this

world, and especially in this part of it, than the morality of governments? The theory of law is but an elaboration of the principles of justice, applied to society. But the practice of law is, for the most part, tyranny and fraud, supported by the wealth of the factions and the ignorance and imbecility of the people. (Loud and long cheering.) Whence came wars and rumours of wars, but from an invasion, somewhere, of the rights of political justice? Whence the widespread cruelties and oppressions of India, the horrors of the slave-trade, the wicked assaults on China, (Cheers,) the perfidious aggression at Cabool, (Renewed cheering,) but from the same cause? If one nation, and that Great Britain, could be brought to feel the importance of making morality and politics synonymous, what would be the influence throughout the world? (Hear, hear.) Then, indeed, our missionaries would not be thought satirists of their own nation; our statutes and the Bible would be but different parts of the same body of truth. Our literature would be purged of much of its pollution and falsehood, and the halls of justice, that are now too often clotted with tales, and proofs of might overcoming truth, would be redolent of another spirit, and to them the persecuted and the poor would turn, with an eagerness similar to that with which the homicide sought the safety bench in the cities of refuge of old. (Cheers.) No one, my friends, doubts the importance of the principles and examples of an individual. The nation's principles and examples, which are but the condensation of those of twenty-seven millions of souls, are surely of importance in the ratio of the population, and our influence over other kingdoms. My friends, this is a thought which I cannot enlarge upon, but it is worthy your most profound attention. I may illustrate it by the case of the *abolition of slavery*,—an act of simple justice between man and man. Yet, adulterated as it was by the machinations of our opponents, think of the character we claim, the glory we have won, the influence we exert, the prospects we have opened, the doctrines we have made certain, the blessings we have bequeathed, the peace we have secured, by this single, simple act of common honesty towards a poor and oppressed race. (Cheers.) I have spoken, and freely too, of ministers of religion. I have spoken with unfeigned reverence for their office, and have rather sought to exalt than to debase it, by the reference I have made to its duties, its obligations, and its power. But if we turn our thoughts from the ministers of religion to those for whose sake they minister, what shall we say to the moral statistics which have been produced by the late overwhelming commercial distresses of our country? Who can tell the number of persons who were serious and devout, five years ago, who have returned to the mire, through the "cares of this life?" In how many instances has the amended character, and type of the members of the churches, been detrimented by the ever-recurring question, "What shall we eat, and what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed?" How many young persons might this hour be found, whose religious education has

been neutralized by the depression of trade? How many thousands of religious minds have been driven to emigrate, no small portion of whom, it is to be feared, will renounce by one act their native country and their sacred vows? (Applause.) What number of Sabbath school teachers and their children have disappeared from our schools through want of decent clothing? What proportion of the various religious societies have felt the pressure? and, though they have exhibited no material subsidence of income, yet to what arts have they been forced, to meet their current liabilities? What proportion of seatholders have given up their pews, from incapacity to pay the petty subscription for the salaries of the ministers? To what degree has the religious book-trade been affected? and how far has the decreased purchase of such publications abated the better impulses of our religious families? How many thousands have been compelled to pawn or sell their bibles and their psalm books from the same cause, and having once overcome the anguish of parting with such hallowed companions, have been made callous by repeated sufferings to their repossession? We might ask a hundred kindred questions, and the only reply of the loudest heart would be, "O Lord, thou knowest." (Applause.) Assuming, as I do for the sake of argument—and deeming it unnecessary in your presence to prove—that the distresses of our country spring not from natural but artificial causes—not from the chastening hand of God, but the death-dealing laws of man. Not from the absence of the opportunities to trade, but from the unjust and wicked prohibitions upon mutual interchange—and, not at present, going further into the workings of the national distress, I ask,—See you not the close connection between the acts of the government and the religion and morality of the people? See you not that that which deranges the springs of industry and annihilates the profits of trade, saps the piety of the people—palsies the hands of the teachers of religion—renders comparatively abortive the labours of good men—strikes off the blossoms which their culture had made to appear—and curses with moral sterility the region which otherwise might have been a fruitful garden? (Cheers.) The commercial blight which falls upon religious assemblies soon reaches the family and the school. The fireside, once the seat of nightly hymn and prayer, where inspiring truth recounted the triumphs of the school, or rehearsed the favourite poem, becomes still and gloomy. The domestic comforts are reduced every week; the apparel of the family is worn shabby and patched; the wife, ignorant of her husband's difficulties, attributes her deficient allowances to his sinister habits of abated industry; the children join the clamours and complaints of the mother; and the husband, wrung to the soul by undeserved reproaches, perhaps commences an attendance at the tavern, which quickens the distress an hundred-fold. At length the supplies altogether fail; the want of trade forces the pledge or sale of every thing that will produce money; and thus, the once comfortable abode of the respected mechanic is stripped to the bare walls, and the prospect is even

worse than the past. (Tremendous cheering.) Is this a mere fancy? Let those in our large towns, or in this city, who are dubious of the averments, turn into our streets, and visit kindly the abodes of our once independent population, and judge for themselves. The physiognomy of the parents will be enough. They have not blazoned their destitution, *but they have no bed.* They have kept their children from plying the doors of their neighbours with tales of distress; but they have cried themselves to sleep. (Hear, hear.) The parents chide each other for fools that ever they married, or were not more penurious in their prosperity. Their heart has relinquished hope, and taken to moods of alternate desperation and despondency: love is no longer in existence. The family is a mere juxta-position of wretched creatures, whose mutual sympathies have been destroyed by an involuntary self-ruin. Self-respect is given up: blasphemy against the God of heaven is heard, where the inmates are *desolate and hungry.* Maledictions fall heavy on the heads of governors—reverence for the laws is extinguished—plans of nightly theft are at length plotted without compulsion; and the heart of the once independent and contented mechanic swells now big with the turmoil resolves of suicide; and now with vows of ruthless abandonment to supposed fate. I boldly say, that the cases of deterioration and ruin of this kind, so lamentably frequent in our country, during some years past, lie at the doors of our rulers and legislators. (Great cheering.) On them fall the accumulated maledictions of these beggared wretches, with each setting sun and morning light. They know the remedy as well as we. (Cheers.) The history of such men is not written; and I neither envy its contents, nor desire to share its responsibility. (Applause.) It is an affecting thought that the youth who are now twenty, were, when these distresses commenced, only fifteen years of age. The *interim* is decidedly the most important period in our being; and yet, all the youth of the labouring population have passed through it, under the pernicious and withering influence of commercial and trading distress. What an education! Its effects, however, will never be worn off. Many a promising youth was taken from school to bolster the sinking fortunes of his family, and, at length, by the same cause, was driven from the shop too, and now is walking the fields and lanes around the city, a fugitive without vocation, if not a vagabond without principle. (Hear.) The destination of many of our youth has been totally altered. Some, that were intended for the professions, have been compelled to avert their thoughts to humbler trades, as the more proximate and certain gain. Others, designed for trades, are now beggars or what is worse, soldiers. (Great cheering.) And some even have committed crimes to procure a gaol-home, and are now at the tread-mill or in the hulks. Such as have remained at school have been reduced to the cheaper classes, and with great difficulty the payments of their education have been irregularly made, and in many instances not at all. A larger number still, who, if trade had continued good, would have

received a *little* education, so as to acquire, at least, the art of reading, will now never be able to read through life: they are now too old to con a primer with children, too poor to receive private instruction, and when trade returns, they must devote every hour to provide for the current wants of the day. All that they know must be traditional; they can test nothing by self-examination, and they must take even their religious knowledge on the dictation of others. (Cheers.) The urgency of animal wants predominates in times like these over all questions of self-improvement: the battle is for *life*: the rivals increase every hour; the markets are uncertain; the next order may be the last for twelve or eighteen months; and, mighty as the pulsation may beat for knowledge, the youth of our country must turn deaf ears to her syren voice till a more convenient time, which will probably never arrive. This mischief is daily increasing: multitudes of our young people are constantly melting away from the school forms to the streets, their parents are unable to become their preceptors, imperfect knowledge is rapidly lost, and, as it had established no fixed mental habits, ignorance and vice walk the course in victory, and thus the distresses brought upon our country by the bread taxers bless the national youth! (Cheers.) Here again, then, I pause to point out the connection between the *morals of the people* and the *acts of government*. And again, I say to the friends of morality, "You prune the twigs and leave the trunk untouched, while you seek not to mend the laws." Now, until it can be shown that there is no connection between knowledge and morality, or, until that connection be destroyed, the connection continues between ignorance and vice, and as much more actively as the evil of our nature predominates over its better inclinations. Whatever, therefore, increases the motives to mental neglect, and still more, all that makes ignorance inevitable, must be reckoned among the abetting causes of immorality. If knowledge grew like flowers in the field, or sound mental habits could be picked up like stones in the lanes, times of inaction would be favourable to education, and if food could be had, there would be no addition necessary to secure a national education but the disposition to collect the flowers and the stones. But even knowledge must be bought; and knowledge can never be the *first* object of human care as long as man has a stomach that must be fed, or limbs that must be clothed. (Loud applause.) Hence, then, the connection between the thinned forms of our schools, and the rapidly-increasing lists of juvenile offenders. Sir, I believe the opinion, which now so widely obtains support, is a just one, that the present prostration of trade, and its concomitant deterioration of public and private morals, of which I have only had time to draw a very faint and imperfect picture, is caused by palpable injustice in the legislature of the land. What is the consequence? The upholders of the laws fall into contempt; and law, that is in truth the substitute of God, and should be the common friend, comes to be thought a mere pretence of power, against which the populace direct every antagonist force in their possession.

The legislators, on the other hand, who confess the general distress, and all but acknowledge that it might be removed by the repeal of certain obnoxious statutes, become callous to the popular sufferings, and are emboldened for greater crimes as they succeed in their encroachments on the inalienable rights of mankind. When the property of labour is set at nought by the aristocratic legislature, it teaches the labouring poor, both by precept and example, to despise that of others, (Hear, hear,) and thus, property at once loses its sanction, and crime its enormity. The frequency of ruined tradesmen also enervates the shame of insolvency; and when it is no longer a great reproach to compound with one's creditors, the solvent, but unprincipled tradesman, will avail himself of the relaxed detestation of debt, and such as have less moral courage to sustain the struggle of a panic give up their chances of self-redemption before they had really lost the game. (Hear, hear.) Besides, the retention of a bad law operates mischievously in other directions. The sense of right and wrong grows strong by gratification and use. Popular indignation calls to its aid intrigue and cabal when it is manifest that reason and justice have no force; and the defenders of wicked laws give a mighty impulse to sophistry and mammon to uphold what reason condemns and facts disprove. (Applause.) The retention of bad laws becomes a precedent to successive parliaments, and to other governments; for, as far as the history of our base provision laws is known, it will be shown, that the nation that has covered the earth with its missionaries and its arts has yet the wickedness to starve its own poor, and the impolicy to ruin its own commerce, to retain the phantasmal dignity of our aristocratic faction. (Applause.) The authority of the English government is doubtless great, and will hereafter become the theme of frequent quotation; but, wherever its laws shall be imitated, Great Britain will be answerable for having done her best to propagate the monstrous falsehoods of the corn laws. Again, sir, a season like the present never comes without thoughts and theories of a revolution. Quiet and industrious men in multitudes catch the fever of innovation; plans of indiscriminate vengeance are concocting; the press takes fire, and while one portion of it panders aliment to olden prejudices, another ministers to the new passions of constitution-makers and demagogues, to whom mischief is a mine of wealth, and peaceable commerce a plague, and who ascend into the captaincies of the operative classes; youth unable to read are taught to pout at the wisdom of ages; and men of battered fortunes, and still more battered reputations, find a market for their services, at least among the ignorant and profane—unhappily yet the majority of every nation. Informers become common, if not necessary, and by their vile arts inveigle the weak into ruinous and often fatal positions, and thus sedition's prelude proceeds. The contrivance of obnoxious laws swells the causes and proofs of discontent, and after a few outbreaks of the people, "massacre" is the word, and the organised force of government triumphs over the disorderly power of the mul-

titude, and the heartless upholders of insane laws quote their victories in support of the very abuses that originated the infraction of the law. (Cheers.) But while this state of things proceeds, morality is wounded on all sides, and the guilt of its injuries is plainly chargeable on the upholders of wicked laws. The morality of the law should be its strength, and it is so when their justice is "judged at all." Were governments just—states would be eternal. But we are told that it is impossible, by the wisest system of legislation, to prevent these periods of commercial distress—these visitations of famine—these recurring seasons of blight and mildew upon the fair prospects and blossoming hopes of a nation—these wholesale prostrations of a nation's morality, and general stagnation of its most sublime and elevating agencies. We are told that they are collapses as material and necessary to the healthy progress of industry, as periods of rest and sleep to the animal system; and some will tell you that by studious and profound calculations they have penetrated the mystery hidden from vulgar eyes, and can prove by figures that the most precious portion of a community like ours should partially submit to famine as a punishment for being too industrious, and too ingenious and too enterprising. (Hear, hear.) That it is not the corn laws, or other restrictions upon trade, that have entailed and worked these evils, but the genius of Watt, and Bolton, and Arkwright, and the avarice of men who have given employment to millions at home, that they might clothe the bodies of millions abroad. (Hear, hear.) These acute arithmeticians—these patient plodding calculators of a world's wants and a people's destiny—who count spindles, and measure the power of steam—and reckon the noses of the population—and who greatly love the corn laws—not because they happen to possess the land, and realize a few extra thousands by their existence, ten per cent. on which they are willing to give to the poor, if you will only let them keep the other ninety—who love these laws simply because of their wisdom and beneficence, and because Sir James Graham loves them, who once demonstrated that they were the most *unlovely* things that ever defaced the statute book of any country—these new lights, who shed their radiance over dark intellects, will tell you that the evils we deplore come of machinery and its too productive powers. They will tell you that the Creator has invested the mind with powers destructive of itself; that the more the interest expands, and the nearer it approaches to perfection, the condition of the bulk of nations must of necessity become worse. This is the pith and marrow of the famous argument of "*over production*." The calculations of our modern Cassios, who consume the midnight oil, when hungry children have wept themselves to sleep, bring them to the conclusion that these distresses are the consequences of the triumph of mind over matter; the curses which genius has inflicted on a nation which was happy in the days of the distaff, and knew no sorrow till the mule and the spinning jenny were invented. (Great laughter and cheers.) And to prove their prophecies and uphold their theory, they sustain laws which

shut us out of the markets of the world, and when they have deprived machinery of fair play, turn round and say, "Behold the ruin it has brought!" (Cheers.) Over production! Certainly, if we narrow the range of human action by the paltry boundaries of class interests. If an area of a square mile were enclosed by a wall from the rest of the world, and you were to abandon it to families, the time would soon arrive when the tailor, and the shoemaker, and the builder, and the smith would raise the cry of "over production!" (Hear, hear.) But open the doors! Give the inhabitants of the square mile egress to the world, and the cry would be for ever gone. (Hear, hear.) The wickedness of our monopolists has closed the doors of America, and, to a great extent, of Europe too, upon British skill; and well may the pent-up inhabitants of this island exclaim against over production, though at the same time they are ragged and naked, with unfurnished walls and famished stomachs. (Applause.) If some of the inhabitants of the square mile were to protest against opening the doors, and had the power to keep them closed, what could put down the cry of over production? It is even so with us as a whole nation. The superfluous artisans on the square mile must turn to the land, and the superfluous ploughmen would be equally desirous to resort to the trades. Every month would lessen the supply for all; new claimants would demand a redistribution of the soil; and still the cry of "over production" must succeed. (Hear, hear.) Nothing less than *the earth* hath God given to the children of men, and nothing less than free access to all its people and all its productions will meet the exigencies of the evil. (Cheers.) This is *free trade*, (Great cheering,) or *equity* applied to commerce, (Renewed applause,) and this simple remedy would terminate the monopolists' watch-word "over-production" at once. (Continued cheering.) What hinders the application but the aristocracy? What gives the fraction this baneful potency, but the ignorance of the mass of the people? We are told the system has worked well hitherto. (Laughter.) How, then, is the nation upon the borders of revolution and want? (Hear, hear.) Let the people insist upon having the commercial door opened; and if England had ten Manchesters, and as many Sheffields, her population might go in and out and find pasture, and would never return with the cant of over-production from the markets of the world.

Mr. Thompson sat down amid the long-continued and enthusiastic shouts of the audience.

THE IMMORAL  
AND  
ANTI-CHRISTIAN TENDENCY  
OF  
THE THEATRE;

EXHIBITED IN EXTRACTS FROM VARIOUS AUTHORS.

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IF *amusements* were no more than the word obviously implies, if they were only diversions and recreations from those pursuits which ought to employ the energies of rational and immortal beings, we might investigate their nature with a smiling countenance and a heart at ease. But, when we consider their generally vicious character, their direct tendency to retard the mind in its progress to its ultimate happiness, and their fascinating power over vast multitudes, who are wholly devoted to them, and who know no other aim or end of existence, they are no longer “trifles light as air,” but the weighty concern of every teacher of moral and religious wisdom.

Recreation and amusement, considered in themselves, are not only lawful, but necessary. It is the quality of the amusement, and the manner in which it is pursued, that constitute it good or bad; and among the amusements which deserve to be reprobated by every friend of virtue, are those, which in their principle and tendency are opposed to the genius and spirit of the gospel.

The best and wisest of men have, in their sober estimation of the stage, considered it as “the puppet-show of life—the school of vice—the vortex of debauchery—the strong-hold of the god of this world—the vestibule of destruction. The theatre is by some persons termed

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the school of morals—refer me to any who have been moralized by it; on the contrary, snares are laid for the eye, the ear, the imagination, and the heart. The company—the spectacles—the music—the sentiments—have all a simultaneous tendency to throw down the mounds of virtue, and lay waste the excellences of human character.”

The theatre is strongly marked with a great variety of evils; and it is a remarkable fact, that the theatre never becomes a general or a favourite amusement in any nation, till the inhabitants have become effeminate and vicious. While they continue moral, wise, religious, and modest, the theatre will not arrive at celebrity and general patronage: a high degree of national virtue has ever militated against this dangerous and destructive amusement.

Indeed, there is not one literary advocate who has defended the stage AS IT IS; some there have been who have given us beautiful theories respecting plays, which possess every thing to make them charming, but truth.

“By their fruits ye shall know them,” is equally as applicable to *things* as to men; and the great question is, What has the *real* theatre produced? What has been its influence on the MORALS and HAPPINESS of mankind?

To attempt to purify the stage, would be to render it unattractive. But supposing this purification possible, I should still have my objections. To say nothing of what the actors, from the very nature of their professions, would still be—the assumption of unreal passions—the hypocritical prayers and vows which must still be uttered—and, above all, the public exhibition of scenes between the lover and his mistress—the husband and the wife;—scenes, which though they may have nothing immoral in themselves, are totally unfit for public display, and in such circumstances could not fail to have a most deleterious influence on the morals of *all*, but especially of those of the *young*.

It is a truth which the advocates of the theatre, on the principle that it is the friend of morals, must account for if they can, that the stage has flourished most, in the most corrupt and depraved state of society. How comes it to pass, that in proportion as sound morality, industry, and religion advance their influence, that the theatre is deserted and neglected, and that it grows in favour in

the same ratio as virtue and religion decline? How has it happened too, if the stage be a school of virtue, that the most dissolute and abandoned of mankind are its most passionate admirers, and warmest advocates; that those who trample on every moral obligation, and despise the sanctions of religion, have in every age afforded the theatre their most cordial support? "'Tis strange, 'tis passing strange," that those whose lives contradict almost every injunction of the decalogue, should be charmed with the beauty and excellence of virtue on the stage. But the truth is, the stage is the nursery of depravity, and the attendant on crime. We think it necessary to adduce one fact only. During the progress of the most ferocious revolution which ever insulted the face of heaven, theatres, in Paris alone, multiplied from *six to twenty-five*. Now, one of two conclusions follows from this: either the spirit of the times produced the institutions, or the institutions cherished the spirit of the times; and this would certainly go to prove, that they are either the parents of vice or the offspring of it.

There is one view of the moral influence of the theatre, which ought not to be overlooked, and that is, its influence on the **FEMALE CHARACTER**.

The importance of woman in society has been universally felt and acknowledged: her influence is potent; to her we are indebted for social comfort and domestic joy. Preserve her modesty, let her heart confine her wishes and affections within the circle of intellectual improvement, domestic duties, and domestic pleasures, and woman becomes, what her Creator designed, "a help meet for man," the gentle friend of his youth; the kind instructor as well as the mother of his children; his counsellor in difficulties; the soother of his sorrow in affliction; and I might almost add, the arbitress of his fate. But transform her character; let modesty, the guardian of every female virtue, retire; let the averted eye which turns disgusted from the remotest approach of evil, grow confident; let that delicacy of sentiment which feels a "stain like a wound," give place to fashionable apathy; let the love of home, and a taste for the sweetly interesting employments of the domestic scene be exchanged for the pursuits of theatrical entertainments, and the vagrant disposition of a stylish belle, and the picture is

#### 4 No. 32.—*Anti-Christian Tendency of the Theatre.*

reversed ; the female is degraded, and society has lost its most powerful, captivating charm. Thus the man becomes comfortless and alone ; perhaps he goes abroad for pleasure ; miserable wanderer ! his children clasp the knees of a stranger ; home has no attractions ; he has no kindred heart to partake of his joys and sorrows ; the world is before him ; it allures and intoxicates, but it does not make him happy. Where is the enemy that has done this ? What has dashed the cup of enjoyment to the ground ?—*the stage*. Let the theatrical passion once be cherished in a female bosom, and farewell modesty ; the taste is vitiated, and domestic happiness is gone.

There is a charm in native modesty ; and when this is wanting only in appearance, the conversation even of a sensible woman is rendered insipid and disgusting. The world may call a woman virtuous, who, with a countenance of brass, can sit unmoved when Heaven is insulted by profaneness, and the audience by oaths ; when decency is trampled on, and licentiousness indulged ; and this may be the current virtue of a depraved age : but give me the innocence which shrinks at the touch of vice. When the outworks of modesty are demolished, the conquest of the citadel is comparatively easy. There can be no doubt that the theatre is one great source whence have flowed many of the crimes of fashionable life. It will be no easy task to persuade the professors of religion who love the stage, that it has produced a baneful effect upon them ; for apostacy from the purity and simplicity of the gospel is a disease, which while it strikes every eye besides, is concealed from the miserable patient himself. If a person professing to be regulated in his spirit and conduct by the pure morality of the gospel, can be gratified with amusements, which are pursued with avidity by the vicious and the vain,—in exact proportion as he derives pleasure from those amusements, he must be departing from the spirit of christianity ; “ the salt has lost its savour,” the peculiar features of christianity will gradually soften till they disappear. It is said of Sir Mathew Hale, “ that he was an extraordinary proficient at school, and for some time at Oxford ; but the stage players coming thither, he was so much corrupted by seeing plays, that he almost wholly forsook his studies. By this he not only lost

much time, but found that his head was thereby filled with vain images of things; and being afterwards sensible of the mischief of this, he resolved, upon his coming to London, never to see a play again, to which resolution he constantly adhered.

It is an impressive but lamentable truth, “that many a child of promise has lost his principles—his modesty—his character—in these haunts of wickedness; and thus the pleasures of parental hope have been exchanged for the bitter agonies of a wounded spirit.

Mr. Wilberforce, in his “*Practical View*,” speaking on plays, says, “There has been much argument concerning the lawfulness of theatrical amusements; let it be sufficient to remark, that the controversy ought to be short indeed, if the question were to be tried by this criterion of love to the Supreme Being. If there were any thing of that sensibility for the honour of God, and that zeal in his service which we show in behalf of our earthly friends, or of our political connections, should we seek our pleasure in that place which the debauchee, inflamed with wine, or bent on the gratification of other licentious appetites, finds most congenial to his state and temper of mind? In that place, from the neighbourhood of which (how justly termed a school of morals might hence alone be inferred) decorum, modesty, and regularity, retire, while riot and lewdness are invited to the spot, and invariably select it for their chosen residence! where the sacred name of God is often profaned! where sentiments are often heard with delight, and motions and gestures often applauded, which would not be tolerated in private company, but which may far exceed the utmost licence allowed in the social circle, without at all transgressing the large bounds of *theatrical* decorum! where, when moral principals are inculcated, they are not such as a christian ought to cherish in his bosom, but such as it must be his daily endeavour to extirpate; not those which scripture warrants, but which it condemns as false and spurious, being founded in pride and ambition, and the over-valuation of human favour.”

Dr. Johnson, in his life of Savage, speaks of the condition of an actor, as that which makes almost “every man, for whatever reason, contemptuous, insolent, petulant, selfish, and brutal.”

The AUDIENCE which it usually attracts, should be seriously weighed. The theatre in this view appears as the enchanted ground of iniquity: it is here that vice lifts up her head with undaunted courage; that the most licentious and abandoned females endeavour, by every means, to allure the young and inconsiderate. Whilst the avenues to the theatres are filled with women of this description, on the stage there are many things to excite improper ideas in the mind, and in the audience every thing to gratify them. The emotion is soon inflamed to a passion, reason quickly yields to its powerful empire, and ruin is too often the fatal consequence.

Sir John Hawkins, in his life of Johnson, observes, "Although it is said of plays, that they teach morality, and of the stage, that it is the mirror of human life; these assertions are mere declamation, and have no foundation in truth or experience. On the contrary, a play-house, and the regions about it, are the very hot-beds of vice. How else comes it to pass, that no sooner is a play-house opened in any part of the kingdom, than it becomes surrounded by a halo of brothels? Of this truth the neighbourhood of ———— has had experience; one parish alone, adjacent thereto, having, to my knowledge, expended the sum of £1300 in prosecutions for the purpose of removing those inhabitants, whom, for the instruction in the science of human life, the play-house had drawn together."

"Plays," says Plato, "raise the passions, and pervert the use of them, and are of course dangerous to morality;" and Archbishop Tillotson, in reprobating the conduct of certain parents, says, "They are such monsters, I had almost said devils, as not to know how to give to their children good things: instead of bringing to God's church, they bring them to the devil's chapels, to *play-houses*, and places of debauchery, those schools and nurseries of lewdness and vice."

A modern writer observes, "I am as sensible as any man of the wonderful talents of that poet, Shakspeare. for force of language—for exhaustless invention—for an insight into human nature—for a power to touch and rend the heart, he is unequalled, and stands amongst dramatists as a diamond among pearls; but while I honour his intellectual capacities, I must deeply lament

their miserable abuse. So far from having a moral end before him, he has frequently its opposite, and seems indifferent to moral results. His licentious witticisms, his corrupt allusions, many times repeated, render many parts of his works, in a *moral* light, the objects of indignation and disgust."

That *christians* ought to abhor the stage, when they consider it as a TEACHER; and that they ought to despise it as an AMUSEMENT degrading to the character, and as injurious to the pursuits of immortal beings, will be at once acknowledged; they are obliged to do so more than others. If the subject were doubtful, were it a matter of question only, whether the theatres were lawful to christians or not, the disciple of Jesus is bound to take the safest side, to avoid the appearance of evil, and to live to the glory of God. His amusements are the pleasures of religion; he has what the scriptures call "a new heart;" a heart whose affections centre in God the all-sufficient good. It is formed for celestial joys, and it aspires after the entertainments of angels. Feeling the importance of the condition of man, as a moral agent, accountable not merely for the direct effects, but also for the remote influence of his actions, we cannot but shudder at the state of those who have opened the fountains of impurity, at which fashion leads its successive generations to drink. Nor shall we cease, as long as our voices can be heard, from warning our countrymen against tasting the deadly stream of theatrical pleasure, or inhaling the pestiferous vapours which infect its borders.

It is for you, then, reader, to determine, whether you will renounce christianity or the theatre. Fear not the world, neither its "dread laugh;" flee from its lying vanities, and seek for a "knowledge of the truth,"—avoid its debasing follies, and inquire after the "wisdom that is from above,"—shun its destructive vices, and search for that piety which alone can make thee happy. Come to the feet of that Saviour, whose grace alone can enable thee to love the ways of religion, and hate those of sin—to "abhor that which is evil and cleave unto that which is good."

READER, forget not that for all thy occupations and thy *amusements*, God will bring thee to judgment. Forget not the great responsibility which attaches to you

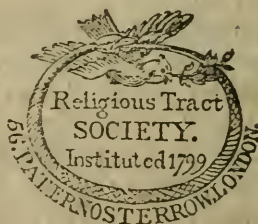
for the due improvement of time, “Redeeming the time because the days are evil;” when the immense value of the immortal soul, and the infinite price which was paid for its redemption, are considered, is it right to trifle away your precious time in attending to the fictions of romance and the spells of sorcery and witchcraft in a theatre? is there time for amusement when the soul is at stake, when eternity is in view, and when the ambassadors for Christ are so earnest, as though God did beseech you by them, “we pray you in Christ’s stead be ye reconciled to God?” “For he was made sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” Forget not, believer, that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. How can you then be found in the temple of sin, vanity, and licentiousness, and be blameless?

Abstain from all appearance of evil: and the very God of peace sanctify you wholly. 1 Thess. v. 22, 23.

Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not into the way of evil men; avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away. Prov. iv. 14, 15.

Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil. Exod. xxiii. 2.

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. Psalm i. 1.



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# THE WAY OF THE TRANSGRESSOR.

BY A MISSIONARY.

AS I am about to leave my native land to preach the gospel to the heathen, my thoughts have been led back to the means which the Spirit of God employed to call me from the darkness of nature into the glorious light of the gospel of Christ. Those means were connected with the history of one of my young companions, which I shall now record, hoping that the following facts relative to his history and my own will prove both a warning and an encouragement to the reader.

In the spring of 18—, I first became acquainted with the subject of the following narrative. He was then about fifteen years of age, his appearance was pleasing, his mental capacity good, and his conduct was invariably marked with great mildness. He was liked by those who had the slightest acquaintance with him; while those who had opportunities of more intimate fellowship, deemed it at once their privilege and delight. In fact, though he was evidently well read, and his object appeared to be to please and instruct, at the same time, he was always ready to receive from the lips of others the least degree of information on any subject.

He was at this period steady in his habits, and his young associates were of a strictly moral order. He had a mother, of whom it might be said; that she was “an Israelite indeed in whom there was no guile:” his father died while he was yet very young, leaving him entirely to the superintendence of his excellent mother. It was her constant anxiety to train him up for God: to effect this purpose, she taught him early to reverence the scriptures, to pray, and to attend the sanctuary of the Most High; nor was this all, she frequently took him into her closet, and prayed with him for his temporal and spiritual well-being.

When he had arrived at his sixteenth year the prayers and anxious labours of this pious matron appeared to be about to receive a signal recompense. He became deeply impressed with the instructions and addresses of an aged

without the least change being effected. His mind seemed powerfully awake to its eternal interests, his conscience awoke from its dreamy slumbers, and refused to be comforted, because there was not peace. He strove to dispossess his mind of those convictions, but in vain; they returned with increased energy, until at length he was led to the throne of grace, and he indulged a hope that he was a true believer in Christ.

Amidst these struggles and convictions, he was called to sustain a heavy loss in the death of his mother. He saw her end; it was peace. He heard her dying testimony, that "none but Jesus, none but Jesus, can do helpless sinners good;" he listened to her dying request, that "he would cast himself upon Christ who would sustain, direct, and save him."

After the death of this excellent woman, he was introduced into a completely new circle of relations; persons who were generous and affable, but quite gay and worldly. Finding, on his first introduction to their circle, that he was the subject of deep mental depression, they at once attributed it to the loss of his mother. Every scheme was therefore devised which they supposed would have a tendency to dissipate the gloom which overspread his mind. They first solicited him to attend private, yet gay parties, at their own house, or the house of a friend; he refused; his conscience would not comply—he felt that such an atmosphere was not favourable to his religious prosperity.

His relatives were continually plying his delicate mind with new schemes: he did not wish to appear obstinate; in an evil hour he consented to make one of a party. The company being assembled, cards were introduced; he was pressed to take a hand; he complied; and thus the first downward step was taken. Conscience was still awake, and remonstrated; but her powers were benumbed as by some deadly opiate. Cards afterwards gave place to music, music to the song, and the dance terminated the gay pleasures of the evening, or rather morning, for it was fast approaching to the break of day when the party dispersed.

He retired to his room, but not to rest; he cast himself upon his bed, he tried to pray, but found no utterance, except in a few agonizing expressions.

such pursuits, notwithstanding the accusations of his conscience, the difficulty was, how consistently to refuse in future. His waking hours were therefore anxiously employed in devising some ingenious scheme by which, through his own contrivances, he might effect this purpose.

But he neglected, in the midst of his planning, to seek Divine direction by prayer; not feeling his own weakness, but rather trusting in his own heart, and forgetting the declaration of scripture: "He that trusteth his own heart is a fool; but whoso walketh wisely shall be delivered," Prov. xxviii. 26. Full of confidence in his plan, he descended to the breakfast room, with an assumed air of cheerfulness on his countenance, thus advancing one step further in his evil career, and acting the hypocrite. His smiles encouraged those who had undertaken his mental recovery. He was congratulated on the renewal of his spirits: a visit to the theatre was proposed as the last ingredient in that draught which was to complete his happiness, in a forgetfulness of all past misery. He objected; but his objections were met by a round of good-natured smiles, and a volley of lively ridicule; "Come, come, don't turn methodist, we all must be as you are sometimes; we all have our sad moments, but it won't do to indulge in them; the death of your poor mother is the cause; you will soon get over this. Besides, we expect, from the specimen we had last night of your abilities, that you will be the leader in our amusements for the season." These and similar speeches, completely put to flight the whole scheme of this poor undecided youth.

In the evening they repaired to the theatre, where amid the gay scenes of dissipation, the unhappy youth appeared, for the time, to forget his miseries. His spirits, raised to the highest pitch by various stimulants, made him the centre of his party. He was flattered by the females, and applauded by the male part of his giddy companions.

Oh! that we could but see the secret moments of those who are struggling with the upbraidings of a guilty conscience, striving against the combined influence of light and knowledge: how would the sight teach us that "the way of transgressors is hard," Prov. xiii. 15; hedged with thorns, Hosea, ii. 6.

Such were the moments which were passed by him on his return to that room in which he had spent many a happy and thoughtful hour. How changed! the very furniture seemed to upbraid him, by bringing to his recollection the affectionate solicitations of his departed mother. The Bible was still more terrible; it reminded him of that God from whom he was wandering. He trembled to open and read that volume. Satan triumphed; and, for the first time, he threw himself upon his bed, without reading the scriptures, and slept the sleep of a guilty sinner.

To relieve himself from the horrors of reflection, this once amiable youth plunged into the gayest pleasures; but even at this period he would not hear the name of God profaned, or the scriptures irreverently treated, without a passing rebuke. But the mind, like the body, when once addicted to the use of stimulants, requires that the potion should become stronger and stronger, the longer it is indulged in. So it was with him. These last impressions of a religious kind were soon effaced; for he discovered, now too late, that many of his new associates, being youths of dissolute habits, had persuaded themselves into the belief of infidel principles.

At first he shrunk from them with abhorrence; but his guilty practices led him to seek shelter in the same miserable refuge. His wretchedness under the influence of these principles, led him to seek forgetfulness in drunkenness; and he was soon habituated to swear, and profane the sabbath. The way of sin is downhill; and, at length, even these guilty practises cloyed, and left the poor vicious youth nothing but the lower depths of vice to drown the troublous warnings of his conscience—the sins of seduction, adultery, and gambling.

While he was pursuing his course to ruin, through the mercy of God, I was preserved from accompanying him in this destructive career. While he was within my power, I remonstrated with him on his improvident and guilty conduct, but in vain, and why? because I had at first partly accompanied him in his giddy course, and was then without a saving knowledge of Christ.

For some months I heard nothing concerning him, beyond the fact that he was fast hastening on in vice and misery. I sought for him, but in vain; he avoided me because of his vicious and wretched life.

One sabbath morning I received a note, penned by a strange hand, informing me that this deluded young man was lying in St. Thomas' Hospital, Southwark, in a most distressing condition. I hastened to the scene of woe,—a scene which will never be effaced from my recollection, while busy memory performs its duty.

I found the unhappy youth stretched on his bed, labouring under a complication of disorders; but principally tortured with mental agony. His once calm eye started with awful malignity; his once placid features were distorted with anguish, and his wild exclamations and wanderings pierced me at every sentence.

He was either recounting some recent scene of guilt, or calling upon his vicious companions for aid; but not one was there. “No,” I thought as I stood; “no, my once loved friend, the bed of death is not the place where the guilty living come to aid the guiltier dying.” Oh! how forcibly did I feel the truth of that passage, “the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.” I inquired of the nurse, if any one had visited him, or if he had appeared to recognise any one since his admittance; to both inquiries she replied in the negative.

Never, never shall I forget his references to his own awful state. Sometimes he spoke of his beloved parent; then he would exclaim, in the bitterest agony, “I shall die! I must be eternally damned! He that knoweth the will of God, and doeth it not, to him it is sin. I have known, but I have not done.” Then, shading his face with his hands, he exclaimed; “O Saviour, thy look of mercy distracts and condemns me!”

I stood by his dying couch. I spoke to him, I pressed his palsied hand, but in vain: at length his countenance appeared more calm, and he appeared to be himself again. He looked around and recognising me, he shrieked, and exclaimed, “My friend, my friend, oh! have you come to see me die? I am lost, lost for ever! Infidelity may do for the living sinner, but it will not do for the guilty dying. No, no! Oh that I could tell you, tell all, what I now feel; horrors! horrors indèscribable!”

In the midst of this distress, I told him he ought to pray; he replied, “I cannot, but perhaps you may be heard. Will you pray for me?” Ah! my reader, what were my feelings at that moment you may readily conceive. I found that like many more, perhaps like you, I

had been deceiving myself. I had used a form of prayer, but my heart had not been engaged in the service. I had never prayed from a sense of my guilt, and need of the blood of Christ to pardon my sins. I wept and faltered out a feeble petition, but it was for myself, for I felt my own state so awful, that I almost forgot my dying friend; he, however, clasped my hand, which reminded me, by its palsied feeling, that the lamp of life was fast fading away. I breathed out a few broken words to the Father of mercies, through the Son of his love, for his soul's welfare; he looked once more, in the most imploring manner; but his speech was gone, his eye grew dim, and ere a few hours had elapsed, he was at the bar of God, where we must all appear.

I retired to my room, to seek, for the first time, with anxious solicitude, pardon and peace, through the blood of Christ. At the foot of his cross, my soul, in broken accents, breathed out its desires and prayers to the risen Saviour, and found him faithful to the rich and full promises by which he has invited the weary and heavy laden to him for rest. Through that divine grace which made me to differ from my former companion, whose early advantages were greater than mine, I trust I have been enabled to live unto Him who died for me: and my soul is impressed with the infinite importance of urging sinners to flee from the wrath to come.

In a few days the remains of this deluded youth were followed to the tomb by myself and another friend, where now, "alike unknowing and unknown," his body rests until the morning of the resurrection; cut off in the prime of life by vicious practises: a warning to the young, of the danger of delay, and the unspeakable folly of sin, and the certain wretchedness it produces.

Reader, let me entreat you, after perusing this brief but melancholy history, to remember this poor young man, and to gain for yourself those instructions and warnings which his history is suited to teach you.

In the *commencement* of his career, his mind was convinced of the evil of sin; he had some views of his need of Christ as a Saviour, and seemed a very hopeful character. While under the influence of these convictions, his principles were put severely to the test; he yielded early to the influence of temptations; he neglected pray-

er ; he sinned against light and knowledge ; he needed what you must possess at the very outset of the religious life, if you would be happy,—decision ; decision for Christ. “ No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God,” Luke ix. 62. Observe the words, “ looking back :” there must not be the least hesitation ; we must decide with promptness and firmness, without hesitation and wavering.

Remember the *progress* of his sin. He first neglected the dictates of a tender and informed conscience, then abandoned prayer ; and to this was added neglect of the Bible. To quiet an accusing conscience, he fled to the guilty pleasures of a theatre ; the theatre led the way to drunkenness, drunkenness to adultery, adultery to gambling, and gambling to both temporal and spiritual destruction ; being a complete and convincing proof of the sinner’s progress as depicted in the first psalm. Beware of the first approaches of sin, deceptive and treacherous insinuations, for its ways lead down to death.

Never say, as to anything wrong, “ This is a little sin, therefore I may commit it with impunity :” small sins pave the way to great ones ; the youthful pilferer too often forms the matured thief ; the youth who dares to trifle with truth, too often becomes the confirmed violator of truth and honesty. There are no little sins with God. What many call “ a *small* sin,” will damn the soul if it is not pardoned. If a man should keep the whole law, and offend in one point, he is guilty of all.

Remember, that though your guilty companions may now boast of their friendship, they will doubtless desert you in the extremity of death ; and that, what is still more awful, if you have forgotton, neglected, and despised God in health, when your fear cometh, and in the agonies of death, he may laugh at your calamity.

You will see also in this brief history, that we all have within us the seeds of the worst vices, for this young man was, at the outset, not practically vicious, but calm and restrained ; not violent, but placid ; in fact, what would be called an amiable youth, and yet see what he was when placed in circumstances adapted to call forth the evils of the heart ! You, my reader, have by nature the same awful dispositions ; you need the grace of Christ to transform and keep you, the Spirit of

God to enlighten and sanctify,—the blood of Christ to cleanse, and make you meet for glory.

Remember this poor youth in the *end* of his career. It was dreadful beyond conception; dying without hope, without Christ, in prospect of eternal misery. Ah! reader, if you could have seen his look, if you could have heard his cry, you would, methinks, have been alarmed and instructed. Flee, I beseech you, now, without delay, to the cross of Christ, where only you can find peace and pardon through the blood of Christ: go, cast yourself at his feet; and, with uplifted voice, but broken heart, say—

“ A guilty, weak, and helpless worm :  
On thy kind arms I fall ;  
Be thou my strength and righteousness,  
My Jesus, and my all.”

Reader, receive the solemn admonitions of Scripture, which are enforced by the facts that have been related.

“ Because I have called, and ye refused ; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded ; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof ; I also will laugh at your calamity ; I will mock when your fear cometh ; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind ; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer ; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me : for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord : they would none of my counsel : they despised all my reproof. Therefore, shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices,”  
Prov. i. 24—31.

“ He that being often reprovèd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy,”  
Prov. xxix. 1.

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